

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 201 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Chair Erickson, Joe Witkowski, Louise Dahlke, Jim Haskins, Duane Pierce, Ed Koslowski, Steve Corrigan, Joan Brusky, Dr. John Brusky, Jerry Polus
EXCUSED: Delores Pierce

****Running Total of Veterans' Certificates: 1780**

1. Call Meeting to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Erickson at 4:30 pm.

2. Invocation.

Following the invocation by Jim Haskins, Joan Brusky introduced her husband, Dr. John Brusky, a Vietnam veteran to the group.

3. Approve/Modify Agenda.

Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Duane Pierce to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Approve/Modify Minutes of February 21, 2017.

Motion made by Duane Pierce, seconded by Joe Witkowski to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Update re: Honor Rewards Program.

Polus informed there are currently 80 businesses signed up for the program and 227 cards have been issued to veterans. Joe Witkowski thought it would be a good idea to make Congressman Mike Gallagher aware of this program. Polus said he had met with Gallagher in person and told him about the program.

6. Update re: 2017 Veterans' Appreciation Day at the Brown County Fair.

Jim Haskins recalled that at the last meeting this group had a discussion regarding the veteran who sits on the midway collecting money for the Wounded Warriors Regiment and it was determined to be legitimate and the vet will continue to be allowed to collect donations. Ed Koslowski asked why and Fair Board President Steve Corrigan said that research was done and there is a record of the money being donated. Corrigan will be calling the Wounded Warriors Regiment soon to follow up on this. Koslowski said it is important not to confuse the Wounded Warriors Project with the Wounded Warrior Regiment as they are two entirely different organizations. Koslowski's objection to this is that there is no Wounded Warriors Regiment post or chapter in Wisconsin and the money is collected in Brown County, but then not used in Brown County. Corrigan said this veteran received an award in Washington DC for the donations. Koslowski's second concern is that there is a tent full of local veteran organizations at the Fair who are not allowed to collect donations or sell anything, but then this one individual who has nothing to contribute to the veterans of Brown County is allowed to collect donations. The discussion regarding this continued and Polus said the question boils down to if the Fair is an appropriate venue for this person to be soliciting donations and the Subcommittee feels it is not the appropriate venue. Polus feels any solicitations for fundraising at the Fair are inappropriate. Haskins said the Veterans' Appreciation Day is

supposed to be a fun event and that is why there is no fundraising and no politicians involved. Koslowski feels the veteran collecting for the Wounded Warriors Regiment is not an accurate representation of the veteran groups and elements that support veterans in Brown County because there is no local Wounded Warriors Regiment chapter and therefore the funds are going to the national organization and not staying in the County to help locally.

Haskins also brought up the earlier discussions regarding moving the appreciation event to Sunday instead of Saturday. Louise Dahlke said the main reason she feels this is a good idea is because the admission rates on Sunday are reduced and bring in a large number of attendees and this may possibly increase veteran attendance as well. She also noted there are fewer activities on Sunday which would open up a lot more space for the veterans. She indicated that some work has been done recently at the fairgrounds and the setup is going to be different this year. She is hoping to have the veterans in the same spot as in the past, but they are still figuring all of this out. Erickson agreed that if any veterans wanted to bring children or grandchildren to the Fair, it would make more sense to do it on a Sunday when the gate price is discounted. Corrigan added that the Fair could do a better job for the veterans on Sunday. He said crowds are the biggest on Saturday and they lack parking and volunteers due to the crowds, but on Sunday there would be more the Fair could do for the group, such as providing golf cart transportation. The decision has already been made to have the event on Saturday this year, but this can be revisited in the future.

Corrigan brought up the electronic tickets and said the Fair can provide tickets that are already printed and then would just have to be scanned at the gate. They could be electronically earmarked for veterans and the Fair would then be able to say exactly how many tickets were turned in. Polus said the posters are usually ready by mid-June and then the tickets are printed after that. Erickson also noted that we have to set the timeline to get the declaration signed naming the day of the event as Veterans Appreciation Day in Brown County.

Koslowski asked when the Fair's flyer will be printed and Dahlke said that it will be printed in late April, or May at the latest. Erickson said we can set the timeline for the event at the next meeting so the information can be given to the Fair prior to the brochure being printed. The timeline was briefly discussed and it was determined that the tent will be open at 10:00 am and the ceremony will be held at 3:00 pm.

Corrigan commented on honoring the Purple Heart recipients. The Fair does the best marketing they can and the local TV stations and print media do a lot for the Fair, but they have to be prepared to do interviews at any time, depending on what other things are going on in the news. Corrigan said the Fair can help this group out with publicity by having a Purple Heart recipient who has a good story who could do an interview on fairly short notice. Pierce noted that a lot of the disabled veterans have Purple Hearts and belong to the area's Purple Heart organization. He said he has heard arguments that the Purple Heart is an award that is given and they are saying if you are going to start recognizing people with awards, what will be next.

Polus informed that representatives of Associated Bank recently stopped to see him and advised that they will be donating \$1,000 to the veterans' office to be used however it was deemed to be needed. He explained each year Associated Bank branches put up veteran displays and the winning branch receives \$1,000. The Allouez branch won this year and they have decided to donate the money to the veterans' office. Polus said typically donations go into the emergency fund, but Associated Bank let Polus know he can use the money for whatever he feels is appropriate. Polus would like the funds deposited into the Subcommittee fund to be used for Fair expenses.

Polus also said he has submitted his request for the Great Lakes Navy Band to perform at the Fair and they have acknowledge the request, however they are not able to make a commitment until 60 days beforehand and this concerns Polus and he feels we should have a plan b in case they are not able to provide the entertainment. Erickson said the Bay Port High School band may be a good backup plan as they are very involved in veterans' issues. Erickson will look into this and keep this group advised. Polus said he offered the Navy band \$500 to help cover expenses and he would be able to offer the same amount to a high school band if that is the route we go. Humana and Heartland will also be contacted to see if they wish to donate to the event again this year. Koslowski said the contributors should be listed on the poster. Witkowski feels that just because an organization gives a donation to be used for Appreciation Day they do not need to be classified as a sponsor or a contributor. He would not classify them in any way other than a donation. He feels this subcommittee is the sponsor of the event, not the people who make donations. Polus said this would be a decision to be made by this group but noted that we have recognized Heartland and Humana in the past which has sent a precedent. Koslowski said that perhaps "sponsorships" would be a good way to note those who make donations.

7. Report from CVSO Jerry Polus.

CVSO Jerry Polus shared a pamphlet with the group, a copy of which is attached, which was developed by the State association and outlines all available veterans' benefits. It is a generic list that can be used at different events, but the information contained in the brochure is all inclusive.

8. Possible Outing for PTSD Veterans.

Erickson said his fishing organization has adopted a lake at the Botanical Gardens and he will be contacting the veterans fly fishing group to see if they would be interested in a spring fishing outing at the lake. He will keep the subcommittee advised in this regard.

9. Report from Committee Members Present (Erickson, Dahlke, Haskins, Koslowski, Pierce & Witkowski).

-Erickson did not have anything to add to what was discussed earlier, but he confirmed that he will talk to Supervisor Schadewald about the possibility of the Bay Port band performing at the Fair event in the event the Navy Band is unable. Koslowski added that another band that may be a good option is the East High Band as they perform at the United Patriotic Society program on Veterans Day.

-Dahlke did not have anything to add other than what was discussed above.

-Haskins informed that IBM has announced plans to hire 2000 vets over the next four years. They have expanded their program to train veterans in software used in defense and law enforcement industries. They feel that those who have served in the armed forces have unique talents and skills that make them a natural fit for these positions.

He also said he saw on Facebook that veterans can get 50% off tickets for select Milwaukee Brewer games. He also read that so far over 1,400 veterans have been deported by President Trump and he intends to do more follow up to see if this is true.

-Koslowski reported there will be a meat raffle at Pearly Gates on April 8 beginning at 2:00 pm. He also said that this year is Amvets Post 57's 10 year anniversary. He talked about the history of the post and said that over the last 10 years the post has donated almost \$15,000 to area people and he is proud of this, especially since it is not a large group.

-Pierce reported on the Connect to Courage event that will be held at the PAC in Appleton on March 28. This is a free event and open to the public. The goal is to raise awareness and learn about the plight and challenges of veterans. There will be resources and educational tools to assist veterans, their families and the community. Connect to Courage is a collaborative effort in the Fox Cities. Lead organizations include American Legion Post 38, Fox Valley Veterans Council, Fox Valley Technical College Veterans Services, Prevent Suicide Fox Cities and Veterans Mentor group. The goal of the event is to connect veterans and those who care about them to resources in the community that will help with life's transitions. As part of the event the Project 22 documentary will be shown at 2:30 pm and again at 7:00 pm. Project 22 follows two combat-wounded veterans on a mission to find hope. Two veterans rode motorcycles from San Francisco to New York and spoke with veterans, researchers, mental health clinicians and educators along with asking hard hitting questions and opening up about their own struggles along the way. There will also be QPR Training. QPR stands for question, persuade and refer and is a simple three step process anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.

Pierce also said the LZ Spring event will be held on April 3 at Pearly Gates. There will be food specials and raffles and fun. It is a veteran-oriented thing, but still open to everyone.

Pierce also presented the group with a donation check in the amount of \$300 from Amvets Post 57 to help cover the costs of the mugs ordered for the veterans' store in Polus's office.

-Witkowski shared an article from the newspaper about soldiers training for jungle warfare in Hawaii.

10. Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law. None.

11. Adjourn.

Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Duane Pierce to adjourn at 5:27 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Recording Secretary

Mission Statement

The County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA) is an organization of professional veterans' advocates. In Wisconsin, the County Veterans Service Officer plays a critical role in the veterans' advocacy system and is often the initial contact in the community for veterans' services. Through the County Veterans Service Officer, the CVSOA is committed to Wisconsin counties to provide a vital and efficient system of services and advocacy to veterans, their dependents and survivors.

The CVSOA promotes legislation and policy at both the state and federal levels that is supportive of veterans' rights and issues that are in harmony with our national obligation to veterans of the United States Armed Forces. The association provides a medium for the exchange of ideas and information, training and support to facilitate the delivery of services to nearly 488,000 veterans.

The CVSOA recognizes the importance and merit of the congressionally-chartered veterans' service organizations and is committed to fostering a mutually beneficial relationship for the common good of all veterans. It is the intent of this organization that every veteran residing in Wisconsin receives the benefits and services to which they are entitled by law and moral obligation.

Are You Eligible?

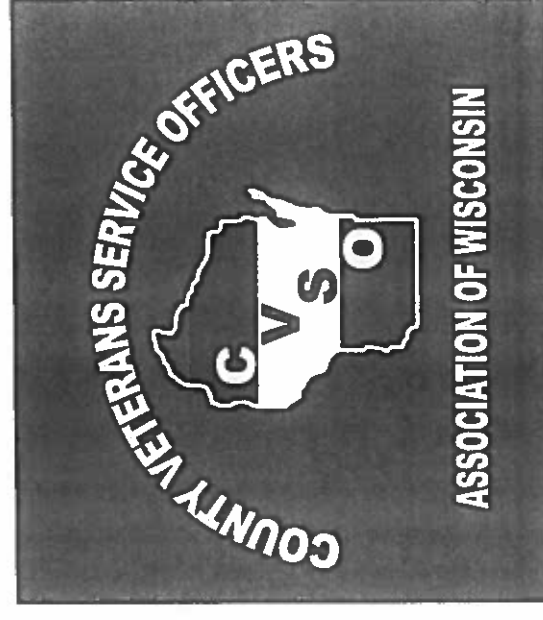
If you served in the Armed Forces, you may be eligible for benefits.

The character, length and location of your service will determine your eligibility for certain benefits.

The County Veterans Service Officers of Wisconsin salute you and thank you for your service!



Veterans Benefits



Contact us:

- * CVSO Website: www.wicvso.org
- * "Locate your CVSO"
- * In Phone Book under County Government, then Veteran Services
- * Facebook: www.facebook.com/WICVSO

In Wisconsin, every county has a County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) and almost every officer has at least one staff member. This is mandated by chapter 45 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

CVSOs are county employees, not VA employees, which means we advocate for you. Our job is to educate veterans and their dependents and survivors about federal and state benefits and assist them with applying for the benefits they are interested in and eligible for. There is never a charge for our services. Don't pay someone else to do something for you that we can do for free.

Below, is a list of just some of the benefits for veterans and their families; however, not all veterans will be eligible for every benefit.

Health Benefits

- * Tricare
- * VA health care
- * CHAMPVA
- * Mental health counseling

Education Benefits

- * Post 9/11 G.I. Bill®
- * Wisconsin G.I. Bill
- * Veterans Education (VetEd)
- * Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)
- * Dependents Education Assistance (DEA)
- * Retraining Grant

Financial Benefits

- * Service-connected disability compensation
- * Non-service connected pension
- * Assistance to Needy Veterans (ANV) grants
- * Veteran's Service Commission grants
- * Subsistence aid grant
- * Property Tax Credit

Loan Benefits

- * Federal home loan guarantee

Insurance Benefits

- * Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
- * Life Insurance
- * SGLI to VGLI conversions

Death Benefits

- * Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- * Widow's/widower's pension
- * Burial flag
- * Government grave marker
- * Burial allowance
- * Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMC)
- * Grave registration

Other Services

- * Wisconsin eligibility
- * Recording of DD form 214
- * Obtaining discharge papers, military awards, personnel records and service medical records
- * Veterans' Home applications
- * Veterans Assistance Program (VAP)
- * State park and trail passes

- * "Veteran" identifier on driver's license
- * Transportation to VA medical appointments

Important Phone Numbers

- * VA Regional Office, 800-827-1000
- * VA Pension Management Center, 877-292-6380
- * Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, 800-947-8387
- * VA Medical Center, Iron Mountain, MI, 800-215-8262
- * VA Medical Center, Madison, WI, 888-478-8321
- * VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI, 888-469-6614
- * VA Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN 866-414-5058
- * VA Medical Center, Tomah, WI, 800-872-8662
- * Tricare, Northern Region, 877-874-2273
- * CHAMPVA, 800-733-8387
- * Education Center, St. Louis, MO, 888-442-4551
- * DFAS for retirees, 800-321-1080

Important Web Sites

- * Federal VA: www.va.gov
- * Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs: www.dva.state.wi.us
- * Tricare: www.tricare.mil
- * Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS): www.dfas.mil